



Development Services

1775 – 12th Ave. NW | P.O. Box 1307

Issaquah, WA 98027

425-837-3100

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ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENT OF STANDARDS
Tree Retention in Talus

TO: Kim Young
Integrus Architecture
117 South Main Street, Suite 100
Seattle, WA 98104

PROJECT: Middle School No. 6 (Talus)

PERMIT NUMBER: AAS20-00001 for SDP19-00002/PRJ18-00020

DATE OF DECISION: January 9, 2020

REQUEST: An application for a Level 0 Review, Land Use Permit, to allow an Administrative Adjustment in Standards (AAS) to deviate from the minimum required retention of significant trees in association with the proposed construction of a new middle school campus (Permit No. SDP19-00002).

LOCATION: Southeast corner of NW Talus Drive and Falcon Way NW (Parcel No. 8562730170)

SUBAREA: Talus

DECISION MADE:

The following adjustment is approved with conditions:

1. Unless otherwise specified, the adjustment shall be subject to all plans, specifications, and conditions set forth in the application.
2. No Talus Replacement Regulations or Issaquah Municipal Code regulations are modified by this design unless specifically identified through this Administrative Adjustment of Standards for site grading and retaining wall height.
3. Before removing trees from the site, the Applicant shall evaluate site trees smaller than 6 caliper inches in diameter to determine if in areas where minimal grading is occurring (e.g. southwest corner, southeast corner, northern edge) the proposal can comply with

IMC 18.12.1385.B.2 by retaining approximately 34 inches of trees smaller than significant trees. If compliance is possible, then, after the City has confirmed compliance, these trees will be retained and this AAS will be voided. If it is not possible to retain sufficient caliper inches of smaller trees to comply with IMC 18.12.1385.B.2, then the AAS is approved with the conditions as shown, except this Condition #3, and significant trees as shown retained.

RATIONALE:

1. Talus Replacement Regulations IMC 18.19C.030.A relies on IMC 18.19A for standards and procedures not included in the Talus Replacement Regulations, except for tree regulations in IMC 18.19A Sections 10.10 through 10.14. Tree provisions in Talus are instead governed by Chapter 18.12 IMC.
2. IMC 18.12.1385 requires a minimum retention of 25% of the total caliper (dbh) of all significant trees in the developable site area. Significant trees are those trees greater than 6" dbh. The Applicant only evaluated the site for the presence of significant trees.
3. There are 33 significant trees and one landmark tree comprising 336 total caliper inches on the proposed site of the Talus Middle School project. Therefore, the minimum tree retention is 84 caliper inches.
4. The applicant proposes retaining 50 caliper inches of significant trees, which is a retention of 14.8 percent. The three retained trees include a 30" dbh fir at the southern edge of the property (Tree ID # 7100) and two 10" dbh Douglas firs at the southeastern end of the property (tree ID #54 and #55).
5. A reduction of up to 50 percent of the tree retention requirements (equivalent to 12.5 percent of the total caliper) could be permitted if all applicable criteria in IMC 18.12.1385.B were met; however, if the applicant cannot meet the criterion to retain groupings of smaller trees that make up the equivalent diameter inches, an administrative adjustment of standards must be requested.
6. IMC 18.19A, Section 1.1.E.4 Approval Criteria, establishes criteria for reviewing administrative adjustments of standards. Below is the review of the criteria for the tree retention requirement.

Talus Replacement Regulations (IMC 18.19A) Section 1.1.E.4 Approval Criteria:

1. The proposed alternative is equal or superior to the Talus vision, goals and guidelines.

Response:

The Purpose of the Talus Replacement Regulations, found at 18.19C.100, is as follows:

The replacement regulations for Talus are as an urban village committed to retaining a distinct neighborhood with a mountain village character. It also

recognizes the importance of both quality of design in the built environment and sensitivity to the natural environment. ... Appropriate site planning will provide connectivity between uses, proximity of uses to each other, and siting of structures and landscape elements to reinforce the street. These elements work together to create a public realm that encourages social interaction between community members.

Talus Planning Goal 1 is to “Design an Urban Village Community with an overall Mountain Village character that reflects the site elements of Cougar Mountain.” Landscaping is to relate to and reflect the natural environment and mountain character, with evergreen trees among the landscaping materials encouraged.

Talus Goal 4 is to “Preserve and protect the natural environment within TALUS.” Objective 4.3 is as follows:

Ensure harmony and compatibility of design with the natural environment. Site planning and architectural standards consistent with the natural constraints of the land and the use of native and/or drought tolerant landscape materials will ensure compatibility between the built and natural environment.

Relevant landscape design guidelines applicable to the Office Campus area include the following:

6. Use a combination of lawn and native and ornamental ground cover and deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs similar in character and habitat. Provide a more urban landscape for the street and associated elements; provide a more natural landscape and transition when away from the street or adjacent to open space areas. Where appropriate and visually prominent, incorporate Eddie's White Wonder Dogwood into landscape plans to support the TALUS position as a community within the City of Issaquah.

7. Provide plantings around building foundations to provide pedestrian scale and to soften the overall mass of a building. Landscaping should reflect the character of the adjacent use. For example, when adjacent to a street, landscaping should be more formal and while landscaping adjacent to open space should be more natural.

Consistent with the Talus mountain village, this proposal retains as many trees as possible given the constraints of the site. Existing landscape elements onsite are mostly

volunteer trees (cottonwood and red alder) in poor condition, as well as invasive plant species including Himalayan blackberry and Scotch broom. The Applicant proposes a plan for tree removal, retention, and replacement that would prioritize maintaining and establishing a variety of native coniferous and deciduous tree species along with native understory shrubs and groundcovers. This supports the vision, goals, and guidelines referenced above, which emphasize harmony between the natural and the built environment and the propagation of native species, including native conifers. Granting the request for a reduction in tree retention would support the vision, goals, and policies of Talus to the same extent as compared with the approved SDP.

2. The proposal will not create negative impacts to the abutting properties or rights-of-way, dedicated tracts, or easements.

Response: *The existing trees and vegetation on the site provide minimal capacity to screen unwanted views or otherwise providing positive benefits to adjacent property owners, so a reduced retention of existing trees is not anticipated to create negative impacts to abutting land. The proposed project includes mitigation strategies to improve aesthetics and screening of unwanted views and is generally intended to provide a positive impact to adjacent property owners. No concomitant modification to the requirements for buffering, parking lot landscaping, or screening is being sought with this AAS request for a reduction in tree retention.*

3. The proposal is compatible with the character of the surrounding properties and their potential development under the Talus vision, goals, and guidelines.

Response: *Retaining 15 percent of significant trees on the project site, accompanied by the tree removal and replacement proposed by the Applicant, would contribute to the mountain village character of the neighborhood. Even with this reduction in tree retention, the proposed development would sustain Talus' native-species woodland aesthetic and would be compatible with the landscape design already present in surrounding properties. Additionally the Applicant must plant trees to achieve tree density.*

4. The adjustment will be equal to, or superior in, fulfilling the intent and purpose of the original requirements.

Response: *The purpose and intent of the minimum standards for landscaping and trees within Talus are included below.*

IMC 18.19A Section 10.1 Landscape – Intent

[...]

- A. Create a Public Realm that helps to define the character and image of Talus;
- B. Promote safety as well as balancing privacy of residents and employees while establishing a Public Realm that accommodates, and even encourages, sociable, outgoing conviviality;
- C. Support a pedestrian and bicycle oriented environment;
- D. Provide safety to pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic;
- E. Promote wise and efficient use of potable water resources;
- F. Protect water quality; and
- G. Ensure appropriate plant material selection and spacing for proposed locations and uses.

The proposed development is consistent with the above intent statements, particularly with regard to A, creating a public realm that helps to define the mountainous character and image of Talus, and G, ensuring appropriate plant material selection and spacing. Tree retention, albeit with the proposed reduction, facilitates safety and privacy through screening, supports water quality and broader protection of the natural environment, and sustains the unified mountain village aesthetic that contributes to Talus' sense of community and conviviality.

5. The proposal does not negatively impact any safety features of the project, nor create any hazardous features.

Response: *No negative impacts on safety are expected as a result of the proposed reduction in tree retention. Hazard trees in poor condition that would otherwise pose a risk to site users would be removed under the Applicant's proposed tree removal and preservation plan.*

6. The proposal will not create negative impacts to public services, including but not limited to fire and emergency services.

Response: *No public services will be adversely impacted as a result of the proposed reduction in tree retention.*

TIME LIMIT OF DECISION:

The final decision approving this Administrative Adjustment of Standards is valid for five years as specified by Talus Replacement Regulations section 3.11, or as amended by the Code.

APPEALS:

This decision may be appealed. A letter of appeal shall include the reason for the appeal and the required filing fee. All appeals shall be filed with the Permit Center by the Appeal Deadline of 5:00 pm January 24, 2020.



January 9, 2020

Katie Cote, Planning Consultant

Date

ATTACHMENT LIST:

- Attachment A: Applicant's Project Narrative (Significant Tree Retention)
- Attachment B: Plan Set

ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENT OF STANDARDS

TO: City of Issaquah

FROM: Nick Hagan
Weisman Design Group

DATE: January 6, 2020

SUBJECT: **Administrative Adjustment of Standards #4
Significant Tree Retention**

Middle School No. 6 / Issaquah School District
SE Corner of NW Talus Drive and Falcon Way NW
Issaquah, WA 98027

Administrative Adjustment of Standards to Issaquah Municipal Code CIDDs Section 10.13 Tree Retention

CIDDs Section 10.13 (Tree Retention Requirements) obliges new projects to retain 25 percent of the total diameter of the existing significant tree stock. The subject site contains a total of 33 significant and one landmark trees. Total caliper inches for existing significant and landmark trees is 336 caliper inches; therefore, the 25 percent **Tree Retention minimum for the project is 84 caliper inches**. The project currently proposes retaining 50 caliper inches, which is a retention of just 15%.

In cases where the minimum tree retention requirement cannot be met due to difficult site conditions and other factors, CIDDs Section 10.13.B allows the DSD Director to modify the tree retention requirements pursuant to the following criteria, where either criterion 1-4 and/or criteria 5 are met, and where criteria 6 must be met.

Criterion (1): The modification is consistent with the purpose and intent of this Chapter, and the Central Issaquah Plan goals and policies.

Criterion (2): The modification incorporates the retention of a grouping(s) of smaller trees that make up the equivalent diameter inches and retains other natural vegetation occurring in association with the smaller tree grouping(s).

Criterion (3): The modification is necessary because the size, shape, topography, location of the subject property may jeopardize the reasonable use of the property and reasonable alternatives do not exist.

Criterion (4): The modification is necessary because the proposed buildings and site layout, required ingress/egress, existing and proposed utility locations, trails, storm drainage improvements or similar constraints may jeopardize the reasonable use of the property and reasonable alternatives that are consistent with the Central Issaquah Plan do not exist.

Criterion (5): The modification is necessary to provide solar access to a building that incorporates active solar devices. Windows are solar devices only when they are south-facing and include special storage elements to distribute heat energy.

Criterion (6): The applicant replaces trees on site and/or off-site or pays a fee in-lieu-of in accordance with 10.14.C-D Replacement Trees for reductions less than the minimum tree density requirement.

The project has shown that criterion 1, 3, 4 and 6 have been met. Criteria 5 was not applicable. Criteria 2 can not be met with the proposed project development. An Administrative Adjustment of Standards (AAS) is being requested based on the following rationales as they relate to the existing individual tree groupings noted below. Location of tree groupings are identified on the

GROUP 1

Trees #112 and 113 are in direct conflict with the northeast exterior wall of the proposed parking garage structure. Saving trees would eliminate at a minimum (8) of the project's required parking stalls.

GROUP 2

Tree #111 is noted in the Arborist Report as being in "very poor" health due to bronze birch borer. The trees proximity to the public sidewalk along NW Talus Drive makes it a potential hazard.

GROUP 3

Trees #107 – 110 are noted in the Arborist Report as being in "very poor" health. Saving trees would prohibit the development of the emergency vehicle access drive along the east side of the classroom wing of the building.

Group 4

Trees #117-134 and 138 are noted in the Arborist Report as being in "poor" condition. Saving trees would eliminate the development of the running track and multi-purpose field which are two core program requirements for the middle school.

Group 5

Trees #1-9 are noted in the Arborist Report as being in "poor" condition. Saving trees would require adjustment to grading and wall construction and would eliminate the bus loop due to space constraints on site. The separate bus loop is a core program requirement of the middle school.

Group 6

Trees #11-16 and 18 are noted in the Arborist Report as being in "poor" condition. Saving trees would require re-routing of the new water main and pedestrian trail. Trees would be severely impacted by grading activities required to construct retaining walls between bus loop and parent drop-off loop.

Group 7

Trees #19 and 20 are noted in the Arborist Report as being in "poor" condition. Saving trees would eliminate a minimum of (3) required parking stalls.

Group 8

Trees #135-137 are noted in the Arborist Report as being in "poor" condition. Saving trees would eliminate the development of the running track and multi-purpose field which are two core program requirements for the middle school.

Group 9

Trees #22-24 are noted in the Arborist Report as being in "poor" condition. Saving trees would eliminate the development of the running track and multi-purpose field which are two core program requirements for the middle school.

GROUP 10

Tree #97 is noted in the Arborist Report as being in "very poor" health. Saving trees would prohibit the development of the emergency vehicle access drive along the east side of the classroom wing of the building.

Issaquah Municipal Code section 18.12.170D Administrative adjustment of standards – landscaping approval criteria are listed below. We believe each criterion have been met as follows:

1. The adjustment(s) will be equal to, or superior in, fulfilling the intent and purpose of the landscape requirements.

Response – Existing landscape is comprised almost entirely of volunteer trees (Cottonwood and Alder) in poor condition and invasive plant species including Himalayan Blackberry and Scotch Broom due to prior site grading. Redevelopment proposed will plant a variety of native coniferous and deciduous tree species along with native understory shrubs and groundcovers. All other landscape requirements are proposed to be met.

2. The adjustment(s) does not negatively impact the adjacent property owners.

Response – Existing trees and vegetation provide little to no benefit in terms of screening unwanted views, providing pleasant aesthetics, lessening noise impacts or otherwise providing positive benefits to adjacent property owners. Redevelopment proposed will provide improved aesthetics and screening of unwanted views that will likely be providing a positive impact to adjacent property owners.

3. The landscape adjustment(s) shall provide consistency with the intent, scale and character of the zoning district involved.

Response – The proposed landscape development will carry forward the native woodland aesthetic present in the Talus neighborhood and continue the use of successful plant palettes already present.

4. The intent and purpose of the required screening and/or buffering of uses or specific areas (for example dumpsters and parking areas) are not jeopardized.

Response – reductions in the requirements for buffering, parking lot landscaping or screening are not being sought with this AAS request.

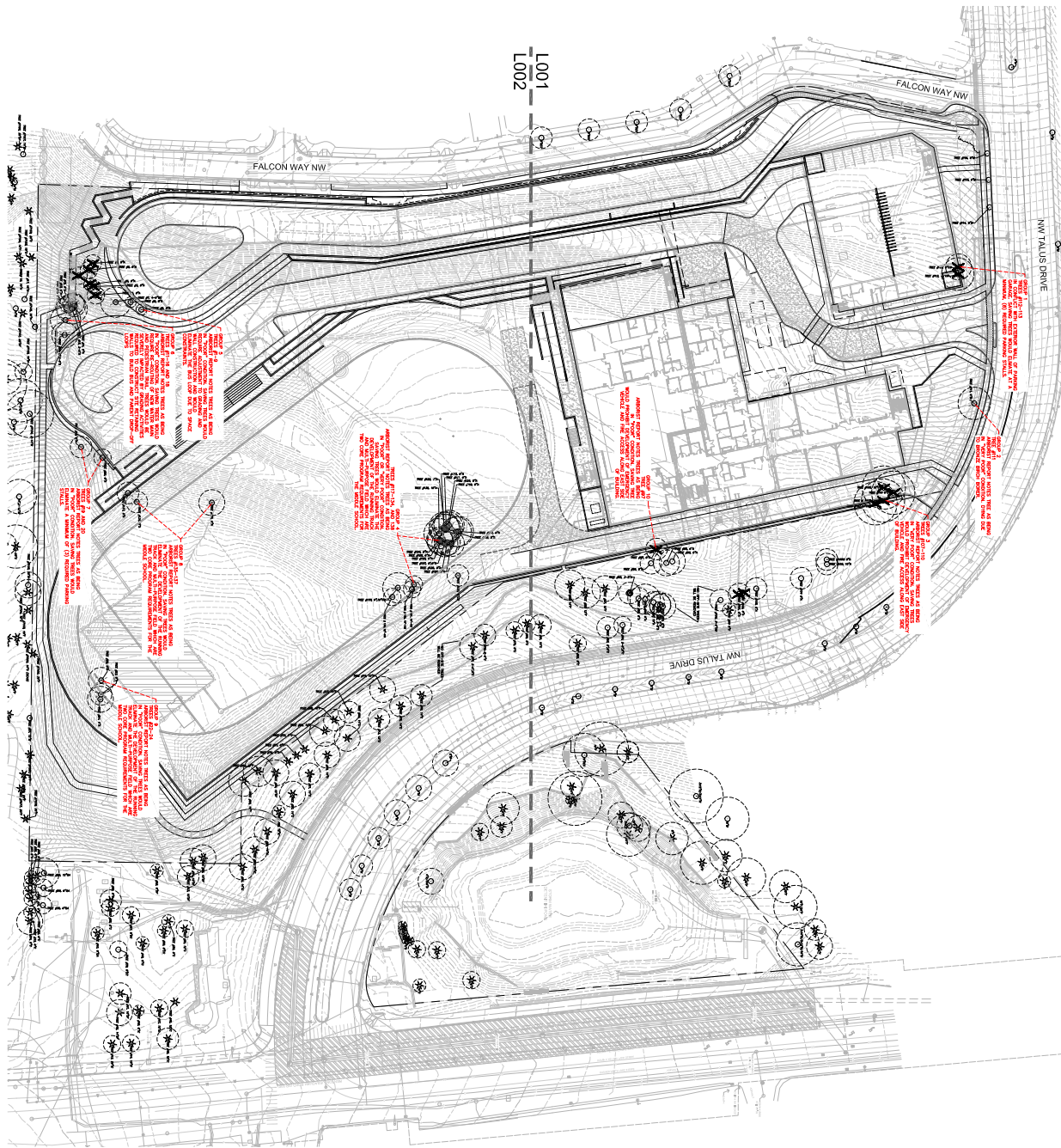
In summary, without the requested AAS for tree retention, major program elements for a middle school could not be built, a reduction in parking stalls would be needed and public safety could not be maintained. Redevelopment of the project site will provide long term landscape benefits that might not otherwise be achieved.

Feel free to call or email if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Nick Hagan, ASLA
Principal and CEO
Weisman Design Group, Inc. P.S.



ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENT TO STANDARDS #4

L000

TREE
EXHIBIT

DATE:	10/06/2019
DRAWN BY:	2181/120
CHECKED BY:	AL
IN CHARGE:	HN
PROJECT:	Issaquah
CLIENT:	School District

ISSAQUAH SCHOOL DISTRICT
MIDDLE SCHOOL NO. 6

Talus Parcel 17-B
Issaquah, WA 98027

WEISMANDESIGNGROUP



integrus
A GENTILE & SONS COMPANY

100 SOUTH MAIN STREET, SUITE 100, SEATTLE, WA 98104
TEL: 206.461.1000 FAX: 206.461.1001